

Amendment to the claims

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (original) A system for accepting and storing items for subsequent pickup by a commercial carrier, comprising:

- an outer housing;
- means for weighing an item which a customer may intend to ship;
- means for inputting information relating to the destination of the item from customer;
- control means for calculating a shipment fee for the item, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means;
- means in communication with said control means, for accepting identification information relating to eventual payment from the customer, said communication means comprising means for receiving and reading a credit card, means for communicating the charges information to a central location for billing the charges to said customer;
- a storage area defined by said outer housing; and
- secure deposit means for permitting a customer to securely deposit the item into the storage area, said secure deposit means including a first zone which serves as a holding space when said item is first placed in the storage area and a secure zone into which the item is moved for secure storage

Claim 2 (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said system includes means for supplying voice instructions for operation of said system.

Claim 3 (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said means for communicating comprise a card reader supported in said outer housing and a telephone line connected to said card reader at one end and a credit card service center at the other end.

Claim 4 (original) The system of claim 1 wherein said means outer housing includes means for measuring the item size and inputting such size into said control means for use in calculating the shipping charge.

Claim 5 (currently amended) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding items for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services, said automated unit comprising:

means for weighing the item to be shipped in order to obtain an item shipping weight, said weighing means secured to or contained within said unit ;

means for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating the fee for shipment of the item based in part upon said inputted information and said item shipping weight, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means, and wherein said control means further ~~including~~ includes means for receiving credit card information and means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to the account of the person owning the credit card, said means for communicating the shipment fee being by telephone lines;

means contained within said unit for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service; and

means for storing the inputted information once said item is disposed in said secured storage means, wherein said inputted information storing means is in communication with said control means and said means for inputting information.

Claim 6 (currently amended) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 5 including means contained within said unit for printing a hard copy of said manifest.

Claim 7 (original) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 5 wherein said means for storing said information further includes means for communicating said information to a remote location.

Claim 8 (original) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 5 wherein said means for receiving said credit card information comprises a magnetic card reader.

Claim 9 (currently amended) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 8, including a means secured to or contained within said unit for issuing a shipping label, and wherein said fee communicating means includes means for validating said credit card prior to issuing the shipping label.

Claim 10 (currently amended) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding items for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services; said automated unit comprising; :

means for weighing the item to be shipped in order to obtain an item shipping weight, said weighing means secured to or contained within said unit;

means for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating the fee for shipment of the item based in part upon said inputted information and said item shipping weight, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means, and wherein said control means further including includes means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to the account of the person, said means for communicating the shipment fee being by telephone lines;

means contained within said unit for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service; and

means for storing the inputted information once said item is disposed in said secure storage means, said information storage means including means for transmitting a manifest to a remote location , wherein said inputted information storing means is in communication with said control means and said means for inputting information.

Claim 11 (currently amended) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 10, including a means secured to or within unit for issuing a shipping label, and wherein said fee communicating means includes means for validating said account prior to issuing the shipping label.

Claim 12 (original) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 10 including means for printing a hard copy of said account charge for said person.

Claim 13 (original) A system for accepting and storing items for subsequent pickup by a commercial carrier, comprising:

- means for weighing an item which a customer may intend to ship;
- means for inputting information relating to the destination of the item from customer;
- control means for calculating a shipment fee for the item, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means;
- means in communication with said control means, for accepting identification information relating to eventual payment from the customer, said communication means comprising means for communicating the charges information to a central location for billing the charges to said customer;
- a storage area; and
- secure deposit means for permitting a customer to securely deposit the item into the storage area, said secure deposit means including a first zone which serves as a holding space when said item is first placed in the storage area and a secure zone into which the item is moved for secure storage and means for conveying said item from said holding space to said storage area.

Claim 14 (original) A system for accepting and storing item for subsequent pickup by a commercial carrier, comprising:

- means for weighing an item which a customer may intend to ship, said weighing means being supported by said system;
- means for inputting information relating to the destination of the item from customer;
- control means for calculating a shipment fee for the item, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means;
- means in communication with said control means, for accepting identification information relating to eventual payment from the customer, said communication means comprising means for communicating the charges information to a central location for billing the charges to said customer;
- a storage area; and
- secure deposit means for permitting a customer to securely deposit the item into the storage area, said secure deposit means including a first zone which serves as holding space when said item is first placed in the storage area and a secure zone into which the item is moved for secure storage.

Claim 15 (original) The system of claim 14, wherein said means for communicating comprise a card reader and a telephone line connected to said card reader at one end and a credit card service center at the other end.

Claim 16 (currently amended) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding item for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services; said automated unit comprising;

means for weighing the item to be shipped in order to obtain an item shipping weight, said weighing means secured to or contained within said unit;

means for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating the fee for shipment of the item based in part upon said inputted information and said item shipping weight, said control means being in communication with said weighing means and said information inputting means, and wherein said control means further ~~including~~ includes means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to the account of the person, said means assessing comprising means for printing a hard copy of said account charge for said person;

means contained within said unit for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service; and

means for storing the inputted information once said item is disposed in said secured storage means, wherein said inputted information storing means is in communication with said control means and said means for inputting information.

Claim 17 (original) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 16 including means for communicating said account charge to a remote location.

Claim 18 (currently amended) The integrated, automated, unattended unit of claim 16, including a means secured to or within said unit for issuing a shipping label, and wherein said fee communicating means includes means for validating said account prior to issuing the shipping label.

Claim 19 (currently amended) An integrated, automated, unattended unit for collecting and securely holding items for collection and shipment by commercial delivery services; said automated unit comprising;

means for inputting information relating to the destination to which the item is to be shipped;

control means for analyzing the inputted information and calculating the fee for shipment of the item; said control means further including means for communicating and assessing the shipment fee to the account of the person, said means for communicating the shipment fee being by telephone lines;

means contained within said unit for securely storing said item until the item is collected by said commercial delivery service;

means for storing the inputted information once said item is disposed in said secured storage means, said information storage means including means for transmitting information that may be used to prepare a manifest to a remote location.